97-84048-1

Interborough Rapid Transit Company

The new rapid transit problem

[New York]

[1923]

97-84048-1
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

Box 121 Interborough rapid transit company, New York.
The new rapid transit problem; an open letter to the public of New York city.
21 p. 17 cm.

Half-title.
Preface signed: Grayson M-P. Murphy, Chairman Executive committee, Interborough rapid transit company, April, 11, 1923.

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

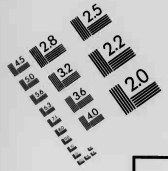
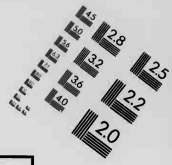
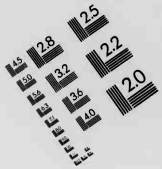
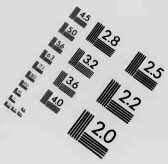
FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 3-24-97 INITIALS: RB

TRACKING # : 22507

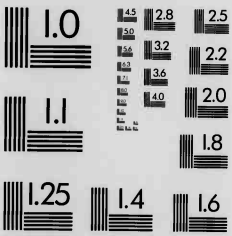
FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

PM-MGP
METRIC GENERAL PURPOSE TARGET
PHOTOGRAPHIC

150 mm

100 mm



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

1.0 mm

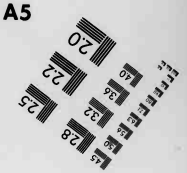
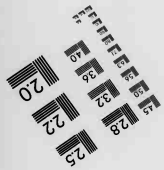
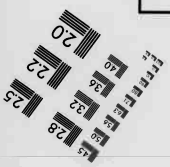
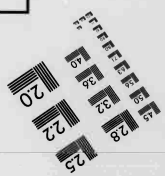
1.5 mm

2.0 mm

2.5 mm

A5

A4

PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS

A&P International
2715 Upper Afton Road, St. Paul, MN 55119-4760
612/738-9329 FAX 612/738-1496

Through the President's Office

B/T

308
Z
Bx 121

The New Rapid Transit Problem

An Open Letter to the Public of New York City

An Open Letter

To the Public of New York City:

The new management of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, which has just come into being as a result of the recent reorganization, faces the future with a clean slate.

It approaches its problems as new problems, with the purpose of giving the best service it possibly can and of doing all in its power to assist the authorities to provide adequate rapid transit facilities for New York City.

In the solution of the Rapid Transit problem there are certain fundamental principles that cannot be changed and facts that cannot be avoided.

It is important that they be understood by the public, and the purpose of this pamphlet is to try to make these underlying facts clear.

(*Signed*) GRAYSON M-P. MURPHY,
Chairman Executive Committee,
Interborough Rapid Transit Company.

April 11, 1923.

I

Starting Out With a Clean Slate

THE date January 9th, 1923 is important in the history of Rapid Transit in New York.

On that day a new Board of Directors of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company assumed office. A drastic reorganization of the Company had just been accomplished. A new chapter in the Company's history began.

As a result of the reorganization the Company had been put in better position to meet its great problems than would otherwise have been possible. This is the cardinal plank in the platform of the new administration:

> **"To give New York the best possible rapid transit and to cooperate with all public authorities and civic agencies to that end."**

What the Interborough Reorganization Means

The reorganization of the Company is far more than some "complicated financial matter" of interest only to security holders. It has a very direct bearing on the possibilities of public comfort and city welfare. These are important points:

1. The Company is committed to a continuance of the uniform five-cent fare.
2. The Interborough Rapid Transit Company is now standing on its own feet. There is no holding company. By court decree, it was divorced from the former holding company (the Interborough Consolidated Corporation), and that Company's $114,000,000 of securities, which have been practically wiped out, are no part of the Interborough's financial stucture.
3. The reorganization put the Interborough in position to rid itself of every outside connection. It has no interest in the New York Railways Company, operating street cars in Manhattan, and it is in process of ridding itself of all interest in surface cars in Queens.

4. It is rid of the burden of a guaranteed 7 per cent rental on the stock of the Manhattan Elevated Railroad. It still leases and operates the "L" roads and the preservation of this system, with a uniform fare, gives the public benefits and conveniences too numerous to explain here, but the reduced rental paid the Manhattan Elevated Company is on an earning basis. For the current year it is to be 3 per cent, if earned. In other words the rentals paid for that company's property have a direct relation to the service it gives the public.
5. Dividends to Interborough stockholders are strictly limited—in no case, prior to 1950, to rise above 7 per cent a year—and no dividends can be paid before July 1, 1926.
6. The reorganization provides for $10,500,000 of new capital furnished by the present security holders.
7. The composition of the board of directors marks a new policy in public utilities—three of its members represent the public, these members being Judge Abel E. Blackmar, Herman A. Metz, former comptroller of New York City, and William W. Niles. The other members of the Board represent no dominant financial interest.

8. The security holders in the reorganized Company number some 35,000. This constitutes, in fact, public or popular ownership, for among the stockholders are many women, charitable institutions, estates, trustees, savings banks and trust companies, insurance companies and educational institutions. The largest stockholder is not an individual but an estate.

II

More Facilities the Only Solution of the Rapid Transit Problem

WE are at least ten years behind an adequate rapid transit building program, probably more, for if our present mileage were doubled, it would be none too much, and such an additional mileage, in all probability, could not be financed and constructed in ten years.

The population of the city is growing at the rate of more than 125,000 a year. There is no possible way to meet that growth except by building more subways.

The best that can possibly be expected is some additional lines in from five to six years, and that will be only a beginning of real relief. In the meantime the conges-

tion, already very serious in rush hours, will undoubtedly increase as the City grows.

The Position of the City and The Interborough Rapid Transit Company

The subways belong to the people of New York. The Interborough Rapid Transit Company are simply operators under a 49 year lease.

The City's investment in the Interborough subways alone is approximately $150,000,000, and its total investment in all subways is more than $300,000,000. Additional investment estimated to amount to a sum approaching (or perhaps exceeding) a billion dollars more is needed.

The time that it takes to build new subways can best be illustrated by the time it has taken to complete the lines covered by Contract No. 3, which was entered into in 1913. Parts of this contract are not yet completed and in public service.

The Interborough System of subways and elevated lines carries more passengers

than all the steam railroads of the United States put together. It consists of about 375 miles of single track and operates more than 7,000 trains a day. It has carried as high as 3,724,901 passengers within 24 hours, and carried 1,001,730,481 passengers in the year 1922. It has nearly 15,000 employees, who draw about $24,500,000 a year in wages.

In short the lines operated by the Interborough form the greatest system of its kind in the world. It is the backbone of rapid transit in Manhattan and the Bronx, and an important factor in Brooklyn and Queens, and for that reason its position in relation to rapid transit in New York is of great importance.

III

Increasing Congestion the Heart of the Traction Problem

LOCAL transit development in its beginning was a great, even unprecedented engineering problem, as well as a tremendous financial problem. Today it affects every citizen of New York, whether he travels on the rapid transit lines or not.

The lack of extended transportation facilities leaves whole sections of highly desirable territory unavailable for a population which must daily move great distances to and from their work. This means congestion in other districts with high rents, concentrated taxes and crowded homes.

To the employer the result is higher wages and less healthy and efficient employees. To the tired working girl or man

the result is often the dreadful discomfort of a long trip, standing during the rush hours to and from work, with all the consequent wear and tear on mind and body.

The situation is almost intolerable, yet it is sure to be worse before it can be better. The best informed experts agree that travel on the subways in New York will increase 6 per cent a year, and that travel on the elevated lines will increase 3 per cent a year.

If the best plan in the world for rapid transit development were agreed on today and financed, and digging should start tomorrow, a comprehensive system of new lines would not be in operation within five years. By that time, according to the best estimates available, the number of people traveling on the subways would be increased by more than 30 per cent, and on the elevated lines by more than 15 per cent.

The Interborough Urging No Plan of Its Own

It should be clearly understood that the Interborough Rapid Transit Company is

urging no plan of its own for rapid transit extension or unification. These things are matters for the public to decide through the public officials to whom that duty may be delegated.

We are deeply impressed with the belief that the ultimate aim of ourselves, the State government and the City government is the same—the best rapid transit in the world.

IV

The Tremendous Growth of Traffic in New York Rapid Transit History

TO show what a tremendous problem the growth of the City is imposing upon its people, the following significant figures are given:

The Increase of Traffic Intensity in Greater New York

Year	*Facility*	*Total Rides*	*Rides a Year per Inhabitant*
1872—	Horse cars.....	138,722,196	147
1882—	Street cars, elevated road, local only.....	250,510,832	213
1906—	Street cars, elevated, subway, first year...	836,861,206	298
1916—	Street cars, elevated, local and express subway	1,201,067,709	332
1922—	Street cars, elevated, local and express subway	2,596,100,410	444

Conclusions to be drawn from this table are:

1. The old facilities always carried just as many persons as ever—after possibly a brief let-up.
2. The new lines developed new traffic, and
3. The "riding habit" increased so that people ride three times as often as they did in 1872.

Each year the problem of handling the millions of New York traffic grows increasingly difficult. The struggle is hard, not to anticipate the City's future needs, but merely to meet present necessities.

Transit Facilities Never "Catch Up"

The first subway, built to carry 400,000 passengers a day, was carrying at the beginning of operation of new subways, a daily average of 1,108,137 persons.

But wonderful as that record is, look at the present record of the Queensboro extension of the subway.

This record for growth far surpasses the similar record in the first subway. Compare them:

ORIGINAL SUBWAY

First month (November, 1904)	6,150,917
12½ years later	31,668,900

Increase of 415 per cent

QUEENSBORO SUBWAY

First month (July, 1915)	130,894
7½ years later	2,159,128

Increase of 1,549 per cent

The traffic growth on the first subway was considered phenomenal, but the ratio of increase in the Queensboro subway for a much shorter period was nearly four times as great.

231% Growth in Six Years

The White Plains extension of the Subway was opened March 3, 1917. It carried 179,143 passengers the first month. In December, 1922, 593,341 passengers were carried, an increase of about 231 per cent.

776% Growth in 5½ Years

The Jerome Avenue Line was opened June 3, 1917, and it carried in that month 168,150 passengers. In December, 1922, 1,474,072 passengers were carried, an increase of about 776 per cent.

V

The Interborough Anxious to Do All It Can to Solve the Transit Problems

IT is obvious that any delay in beginning construction will make the situation still worse before relief can be expected.

Considered from this standpoint, the prospect is almost appalling. Our City is faced with the certainty that its development will be slowly strangled unless adequate means of transportation be supplied.

Is it not possible that the citizens of New York will take the view that the transit situation is so serious that its proper solution should be looked upon as an emergency measure in which prejudices and personalities should be pushed aside in order that those of us who live in New York should sit down together, as we did in the war, with

the determination that we will work patriotically for a common cause.

The reorganized Interborough Rapid Transit Company is not only willing to enter the situation in this spirit, but it eagerly desires to do so. We have a keen appreciation of the difficulties and discomforts with which our fellow citizens are confronted.

We all know that many of the policies of companies in the early years of New York traction history were unwise. We believe, however, that the shadow of those early days has stretched over years of clean and honest effort, and as regards the present Interborough Company, we know that it is thoroughly decent in both its public and private relations.

From a personal standpoint, however, we realize that—no matter what may be the causes—criticism for inadequate rapid transit service will be leveled very largely at the operating companies, and for this reason we are selfishly desirous of seeing the situation handled in a wise and effective manner.

From a standpoint of public service we believe that on account of the strategic position of our lines and the accumulated knowledge of years of operation, we can be of great assistance to the responsible authorities.

We seek no unfair advantage. All we desire for our security holders is that to which they as honest investors are fairly entitled. Beyond this we ask nothing. We will give the best we have to aid in working out what we believe to be the most vital problem with which New York is now confronted.

MSH 22507

END OF
TITLE